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Civic League of
Saint Louis

How will you vote? on 9
constitutional and 2...

[St. Louis]

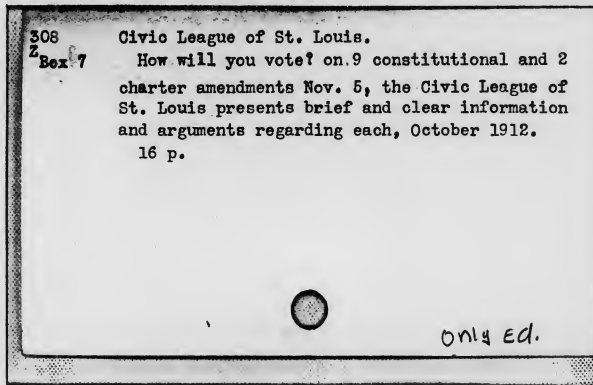
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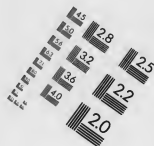
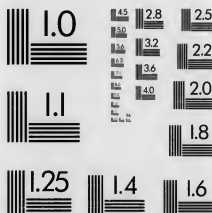
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HOW WILL **YOU** VOTE?
ON
9 CONSTITUTIONAL
and
2 CHARTER
AMENDMENTS

Nov. 5

THE CIVIC LEAGUE OF ST. LOUIS
presents brief and clear information and
arguments regarding each.

October 1912.



To the Members of the Civic League:—

The Executive Board presents a brief and clear report on the **nine pending constitutional amendments** and the **two charter amendments**. The arguments, we believe, are presented **fairly and impartially**.

The League has endorsed only the amendments relating to the extension of **school age limits** and the **State Taxation Commission**.

Every argument seems to point to the desirability of all the other amendments except No. 6, the single tax amendment, on which there is a great difference of opinion.

The League has endorsed the charter amendment providing for the Initiative and Referendum, but has not acted on the amendment providing for an increase in the salaries of assemblymen.

Respectfully,

CHAS. A. STIX,

President.

ROGER N. BALDWIN,

Secretary.

On November 5th you will get two kinds of ballots—one the regular party ballot, the other the Constitutional Amendments ballot.

The two Charter Amendments will appear at the bottom of the regular party ballots.

Don't fail to vote on the Constitutional and Charter Amendments.

Their purposes and the arguments for and against each are explained here.

FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

1. *Giving the General Assembly optional power to provide for establishing and maintaining free public schools for all persons between five (5) and six (6) years of age and over twenty (20) years of age.*

The amendment adds the words (Section 1, Article XI) "The Legislature may establish and maintain free public schools for the gratuitous instruction of all persons in this State between **five and six years of age and over twenty years of age.**"

The original section requires the Legislature to maintain free public schools **only for children between the ages of six and twenty.**

OBJECT:—to permit the Legislature to enact laws for the free instruction of children between five and six in the **kindergartens**, and men and women over twenty, especially in **night schools**.

It only makes the enactment of such laws by the Legislature possible, **not obligatory.**

Proposed by the Committee for Social Legislation, representing large organized interests in St. Louis and throughout the state. It was necessitated chiefly because of conditions in the large cities.

It will make possible in such cities:

FIRST, the admission of children of five to the kindergarten, thus adding one year more of school for the many children, (75 per cent) who are forced to leave school at 14 to go to work.

SECOND, the instruction of foreigners and others in our night schools without the payment of a fee as at present.

THIRD, the use of school buildings free outside of school hours for meetings of civic organizations, public lectures, recreation and neighborhood gatherings.

The cost of this additional use of the schools will be borne entirely by the cities or school districts **that want them, and by no others.**

Endorsed By State Federation of Labor, State Teachers' Association, Conference of County Superintendents, St. Louis Board of Education, St. Louis Public School Patrons' Alliance, Central Trades and Labor Union of St. Louis and many other local and state organizations.

No organized opposition and no valid arguments against it. Indifference and ignorance are its only opponents.

SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

2. *Providing for an increase of the limit of indebtedness that the County of St. Louis may incur for the purpose of constructing sewers, or for purchasing or constructing water works.*

Two-thirds of the voters of St. Louis County voting at a special election **may** increase the indebtedness of the county not exceeding 5 per cent over the present Constitutional limit, for the special purpose of **constructing sewers, or purchasing or constructing water works** to be owned and controlled by the county.

OBJECTS: (1) To enable the county to construct sewers, which can now be constructed only by incorporated districts.

(2) To permit public ownership of the waterworks, now privately owned.

Proposed by interested citizens and officials of the county. It has no formal endorsements but is understood to be generally favored throughout the county.

No opposition, so far as we can learn, and **no objection.**

THIRD CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

3. *Increasing the limit of tax rate that may be levied for municipal purposes by cities and towns of more than one thousand (1,000) inhabitants and less than thirty thousand (30,000) inhabitants.*

The amendment **changes two words** in Section 11 of article 10 of the Constitution to increase the limit of indebtedness in **cities of 10,000 to 30,000 population** from sixty cents to one dollar on the one hundred dollar valuation and in **cities of 1000 to 10,000 population** from fifty to ninety cents on the one hundred dollar valuation.

OBJECT: To provide additional funds for the smaller cities.

Proposed by the Hannibal Commercial Club and the Missouri League of Municipalities. The smaller cities find it impossible to conduct their affairs under a fifty or sixty cent rate on the one hundred dollar value.

No relief can be secured by increasing the assessed valuation, because the valuation of property in cities cannot exceed the valuation made in those cities for county purposes.

Many of the smaller cities have grown to be industrial communities since the Constitution was made in 1875. They have taken on municipal activities never contemplated at that time, such as parks, hospitals, modern fire departments, libraries, etc.

The amendment only **permits** the extension of the limits of indebtedness. It will **affect only such cities as desire to use it.**

No opposition. No valid objection.

FOURTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

4. *Requiring complete compliance with naturalization law by persons of foreign birth as a qualification for voting.*

The **present section**, which this proposes to repeal, **provides** that every male person of foreign birth may be entitled to vote "who may have declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States according to law, not less than one year nor more than five years before he offers to vote."

OBJECT: To confine the suffrage to those who are actually full-fledged citizens of the United States.

At present an immigrant can declare his intention of becoming a citizen immediately on arrival in the state, get his "first papers" and vote a year later. The proposed amendment would require him to wait, before having the right to vote, until his second or final papers, secured at the end of two years (provided he has resided in the country five years).

Missouri is one of the six states in the Union which permit foreign-born citizens to vote after making their declaration of intention. **All other states require voters to be full-fledged citizens.**

No active campaign for the amendment.

OPPOSED by the Missouri State Federation of Labor, the Central Trades and Labor Union of St. Louis and other labor bodies on the ground that it "curtails the political liberties and civic rights of the people."

FIFTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

5. *Empowering the General Assembly to provide by law for the registration of voters in St. Louis County or any other county of fifty thousand (50,000) inhabitants or more adjoining a city with three hundred thousand (300,000) inhabitants or more.*

This amendment applies **only to St. Louis County.**

OBJECT: To permit the legislature—not to require it—to provide for a **registration of voters** in the county.

It is said that the amendment was proposed in the legislature by interested Democrats who believed that the Republican majority in St. Louis County would be affected by a complete registration of voters. Despite the fact that it thus appears to be a political move, it is generally supported by men of both parties. The arguments in favor of a registration of voters are too generally accepted to need comment.

No opposition. No valid objection.

SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

Proposed by Initiative.

6. *Providing for raising all revenue by taxes on land, inheritances and franchises for public service utilities; exempting from taxation all personal property and improvements on land; abolishing poll taxes and occupation taxes for revenue purposes; abolishing the constitutional limitation upon the rates of taxation for state, county, school and municipal purposes, and providing that the laws regulating the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors shall remain unaffected hereby.*

This amendment proposes a sweeping change in the **basis of taxation** by abolishing the general property tax, and shifting present taxes to **land, franchises, inheritances and articles now subject to an excise tax.**

It divides all property for taxation into three classes:

CLASS ONE covers **personal property**, which is to be exempt from all state and local taxes after 1914. All **state and local bonds**, however, are exempt at once. Franchise privileges and inheritances are not exempt and may be taxed.

CLASS TWO covers all **improvements on land**. This class is to be gradually exempted from all taxes—a less amount being taxed each year from 1914 to 1920. In 1920 and after no improvements on land will be taxed at all.

CLASS THREE covers **land and public utility franchises**. This class shall **never** be exempted from taxation.

All property taxed must be assessed at its full value.

Poll taxes, business taxes or licenses are abolished. Excise taxes and licenses in the interest of public health, peace and safety are retained.

All constitutional limitations on rates of taxation are abolished.

OBJECT: To make **land and privileges** the basis of taxation.

Proposed by the Equitable Taxation League of Missouri (Times Building, St. Louis), which is conducting an organized state-wide campaign.

Endorsed by the State Federation of Labor, by local labor bodies throughout the state and by a number of civic and tax reform associations.

The arguments advanced for the single tax are:

1. It produces a maximum of revenue with least disturbance to productive industry and commerce.
2. It cannot be evaded.
3. Land cannot be decreased or injured by taxation.
4. It forces an increased use of land, by making improvements necessary to provide income for taxes.
5. It taxes the unearned increment of land value created by the community, which should be taxed for the community's needs.
6. It removes all taxes on industry.
7. It invites new capital and the influx of laborers.
8. It can be easily and honestly administered by the state.
9. It will stop the inequalities, injustice and evasions under the present general property tax.

Organized opposition under the Missouri Anti-Single Tax Association (Waldheim Building, Kansas City), the Anti-Single Tax League (Massachusetts Building, Kansas City) and by the Tax Payers' Union (Wainwright Building, St. Louis).

Resolutions **opposing the amendment** in the Republican and Democratic state platforms and by many real estate, business and farmers' associations throughout the state.

The chief arguments advanced against the single tax are that it would:

1. Tax land and franchises only.
2. Destroy land values.
3. Confiscate savings invested in land.
4. Make the state the landlord.
5. Encourage peddlers, injure merchants.
6. Destroy incentive for gain.
7. Be revolutionary and disastrous, spread fear and alarm, discourage investments, force money to other states, advertise Missouri as a dangerous state.
8. Relieve the cities by increasing the burden of taxation on farm lands.
9. Decrease the value and the income of land.
10. Tax the few for the benefit of the many.
11. Drive enterprising farmers from the state.

SEVENTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

7. Abolishing the present State Board of Equalization and providing for appointment by the Governor, in lieu of such board, of a State Tax Commission, and prescribing the number, qualifications, duties and salaries of the members thereof.

The amendment provides for a **State Tax Commission** of three members, appointed by the governor, to replace the present State Board of Equalization, January 31, 1913. Each member shall be paid a salary of not less than \$3600 a year. They may not hold any

other public office. Their duties are to enforce the laws concerning the assessment and collection of taxes and to equalize the valuation of property throughout the state.

OBJECT: To provide a commission of specialists to handle the tax problems of the state in place of the present Board of state officials.

Proposed by the Equitable Taxation League as a new and more efficient means of putting the single tax amendment into effect. **BUT** the desirability of adopting this amendment in no way depends upon the adoption of the single-tax amendment. Indeed, the opponents of the single tax amendment are largely agreed that a reform of the tax system would be greatly helped by the creation of the special Tax Commission provided by this amendment.

"Such commissions already exist in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Kansas, and Arkansas and in a number of states in the East and on the Pacific Coast.

"In those states which have had experience with both methods of equalization the verdict is unanimous that the work can be done much more efficiently by a permanent commission of experts than by any ex-officio board.

"Many of the evils of our present tax situation spring from the utter failure to maintain even reasonably efficient standards in the local assessment of property subject to taxation. The experience of other states, especially of Wisconsin, shows that much improvement in the work of local assessment can be achieved through a permanent tax commission vested with supervisory powers.

"Another function which would naturally be attached to such a commission is that of keeping abreast with the best thought and the best practice in matters of taxation, of studying the taxation experience of other states and other countries, of analyzing the operation and effect of the Missouri tax system, of submitting reports embodying their findings and of making recommendations based upon such findings."—(Report of Civic League Committee.)

No organized opposition.

The only argument advanced against the Taxation Commission is that that it would place in the hands of an unscrupulous governor "a most powerful, compact and dangerous piece of political machinery, which would promote tax-dodging through political favoritism."

EIGHTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

8. *Providing that grand juries, in investigating elections, may open ballot boxes, compel the production of registration lists, voting lists and tally sheets; providing for trials on indictments returned in such investigations; prescribing the manner of selection and the qualifications of election officials; requiring policemen to be stationed in and near polling places in certain cities and prescribing the manner of voting therein.*

OBJECT: The amendment (which is very lengthy) adds a new section to the Constitution for the purpose of detecting and prosecuting crimes against the ballot.

Proposed by the Constitutional Amendment Association (New York Life Building, Kansas City), which backed the prohibition amendment.

Under the last Supreme Court decision at present ballot boxes can be opened only to prove fraud in contested elections, not to prove crimes against the ballot.

No organized opposition and so far as we can learn, no arguments against it.

NINTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

9. *Providing for levying and collecting, on each one hundred dollars assessed valuation, a State tax of ten cents for the support of the public elementary and high schools, State normals, Lincoln Institute, and the State University.*

OBJECT: To provide a permanent fund for the promotion of education in Missouri.

Campaign for the amendment is in charge of the Committee on Constitutional Amendment providing for Permanent Fund for education in Missouri, Jefferson City, Mo.

Endorsed by County Superintendents of Missouri, Missouri State Teachers' Association, State Board of Agriculture, Central Trades and Labor Union, Republican and Democratic State Conventions and other bodies.

No organized opposition. Only objection increased taxation.

THE FACTS.

Education suffers in Missouri from lack of funds and from the uncertainty of the support through appropriations by the General Assembly. **Missouri is thirty-first** among the states in her per capita expenditures for education.

The legislature now appropriates out of the general revenue \$1,000,000 a year for the support of the University and Normal Schools, and about one-third of the whole revenue for the public schools. (The Constitution requires at least one-fourth to public schools.)

A mill tax on the present taxable wealth—\$1,736,371,606.00—would yield over a million and a half dollars for education. It would **take the place of the \$1,000,000** now appropriated for the University and Normal Schools, and release that amount for the development of the state charitable and penal institutions or for good roads.

The public schools system would receive from this fund amounts **in addition to** (not in place of) what it now gets. The legislature will have the right to apportion the whole fund.

The fund will be used:

First—To develop the **grade school system**. Country schools cannot exist on the present maximum tax rate allowed them. Some get **special aid** from the Legislature.

But all ought to be on a solid foundation.

Second—To make **high school education** possible in country districts.

Third—To make possible **industrial training** in the cities and towns.

Fourth—To build up the **normal schools** from a permanent fund.

Fifth—To guarantee a permanent income for the **State University**. Missouri ranks **twenty-sixth** in her per capita expenditure for her State University.

CHARTER AMENDMENT NO. 1.

(At the bottom of the regular party ballots.)

1. *Submitting a proposed amendment to the Charter of the City of St. Louis to the qualified voters of the city, providing for an election to be held therefor, for the manner of voting thereat, and for the publication of this ordinance.*

The amendment **increases the salaries** of members of the Council and House of Delegates from \$300 a year at present to **\$1800 a year**. It will increase the legislative pay roll of the 41 members of the Assembly from \$12,300 to \$73,800.

The present salaries are based on the theory that members of the local legislature need give only a small time to the work and should be paid only a nominal salary. The theory of serving the state without compensation in a post of honor and influence has been for many years applied to legislative bodies of both England and the United States.

The **arguments** are:

FOR THE INCREASE:

1. **A man of small means cannot afford to give up his time** from his work or business to serve the city in the Assembly. If men of small means are to be represented, we must pay them.

2. Under the present system **only men of means or professional politicians can afford to give their time to the Assembly**.

3. **The temptation to graft will be removed** by paying a man a decent salary. A candidate's campaign now often costs him more than his whole salary.

AGAINST THE INCREASE:

1. Under the present political system none of the evils in our legislative branch can possibly be remedied by increased salaries.

2. **The real evil lies in the nominations for office**. Whatever the situation, only those favored by the professional politicians who control party government can get a nomination.

3. **An \$1800 job will attract the self-seeking politician** more than a \$300 job, and we will thus get worse rather than better men.

4. We could get plenty of good men in our Assembly without any salary whatever if our political system would ever let them get a nomination.

5. At best the work demands only a part of a man's time, and an \$1800 salary is out of all proportion for those services compared with the general standard of salaries in our municipal government.

6. The added expense of over \$60,000 will not bring returns in efficiency or better men.

Endorsed by the Tenth Ward Improvement Association, Central Trades and Labor Union and other bodies.

No organized opposition.

CHARTER AMENDMENT NO. 2.

(At the bottom of the regular party ballots.)

2. *Submitting to the qualified voters of the City of St. Louis a proposed amendment to the Charter of the City of St. Louis, providing for the Initiative and Referendum, and providing for an election to be held therefor, and providing for the manner of voting thereat, and for the publication of said ordinance.*

The Initiative.

Under the initiative procedure, **any proposed ordinance may be submitted to the Assembly by a petition** of the qualified electors. **On petition of 15 per cent** the Assembly must either pass the ordinance without alteration within forty days or submit the ordinance without alteration to a vote of the people at the **next regular election**. **If signed by 25 per cent**, the Assembly must either pass the ordinance without alteration within forty days or call a **special election** within ninety days after the presentation of the ordinance to the Assembly.

Any amendment to the Charter may be proposed by a 15 per cent petition, following the same procedure as ordinances, save that there is no provision for its submission at a special election.

The Referendum.

No ordinance **granting to any person or corporation any franchise or privilege for any public utility shall go into effect unless** the Assembly shall submit it to a vote of the people at either a general or special election and unless a majority vote in favor thereof. No provision is made for a referendum on other than general franchise ordinances

Ordinances or charter amendments passed under the initiative and referendum may be amended or repealed only by the same method. Whenever an ordinance or charter amendment is to be submitted, the Board of Election Commissioners **must send a printed copy of the ordinance or amendment**, together with a sample ballot, to **each voter** at least ten days prior to the election.

The arguments for the Initiative and Referendum are:

First, that existing legislative methods are unsatisfactory because representatives do not represent. They are frequently controlled not by the will of the voters, but by the will of a political machine.

Second, direct legislation educates the voter by increasing his feeling of responsibility and developing both thought and opinion.

The objections to direct legislation are:

First, that it destroys the principle of government by representatives and thus tends to lower the calibre.

Second, that voters are too ready to sign petitions without examining their purpose and thus encumber the ballot with a mass of propositions, many without merit.

Third, that direct legislation doesn't represent the will of the whole people anyway, since at most elections an average of not more than 50 per cent of the voters vote on propositions.

Fourth, that a proposition submitted by the Initiative or Referendum must be either accepted or rejected. **There is no room for compromise** through which in legislatures much of our best legislation is secured.

It is coming to be generally recognized that direct legislation is to be considered **not the normal method of law-making, but a weapon**

in the hands of voters to be used **only when representatives fail to represent.**

The initiative and referendum are usual provisions of the Commission government charters, and also of several large cities.

Advocated especially as a means of **relief from the control of local government by a minority of professional politicians.**

Endorsed by the local platforms of the Republican, Democratic and Socialist parties, by organized labor, the Joint Charter Conference, representing thirty business and civic organizations, by the Civic League and by the Central Council of Civic Organizations, representing eighteen neighborhood improvement associations, and by many other organizations.

No organized opposition.

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